1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

These natives do not eat it as do others elsewhere

but they amuse themselves by catching one and trailing it round the village on the end of a string, to a chant of 'Tin-tin-tarum, tin-tin-ta-a-a-a-a-rum'.

The only domestic animals are dogs and pigs. There are no transport animals, no cattle, and no sheep. A horse was imported during my stay for the use of the priest; it caused great excitement among the Kurtatchi people, who called it *wōs*, having no *h* in their dialect. The dogs, every variety of mongrel, are valued in proportion to their prowess in hunting, and are kept on short rations to make them fierce. The domestic pigs are of the black-skinned, long-snouted variety, and do not differ in appearance from the wild pigs that roam the bush. They are known to their owners individually, are treated as pets, and come to be fed when called.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF THE NATIVES

In the present volume only a brief general account of the personal appearance of the people will be given, as their racial type will be discussed in detail in another publication, in conjunction with the analysis of my series of physical measurements and observations.

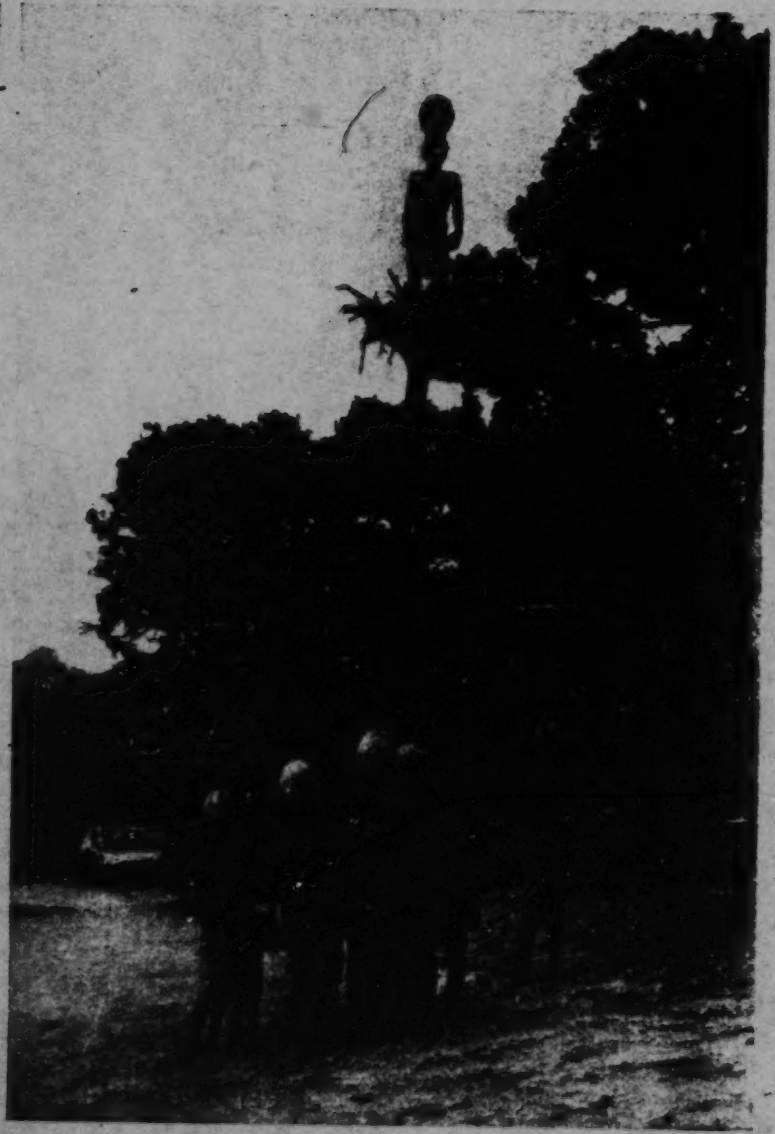
The natives of Buka and North Bougainville differ in several respects from their near neighbours, the inhabitants of the south-eastern Solomon Islands. The most obvious difference is in the very much darker skin colour of the northern group, of whom the majority are as nearly black as human skin ever attains. Some individuals, however, possess skins of a somewhat lighter colour with a slightly reddish tinge; this is much admired. The eyes are invariably dark brown. The hair is either black or very dark brown. It usually stands out from the head in a frizzly mop, like that of the natives of New Guinea, but less striking because it is kept shorter. If left uncombed and uncut, as in the case of boys who have not finished their puberty ceremonies, it hangs in a series of tight ringlets and may reach below the waist (see Pl. 29). Curly and wavy hair is sometimes seen, and occasionally hair that is almost straight. Facial hair is sparse and bristly. I did not see any natives with a full beard, but some keep a little hair on the upper lip. The majority depilate their facial hair by means of a shell (probably a species of *Tapes*, Pl. 38, no. 7), either a single one used like a razor, or a double one used like a pair of tweezers. They

½ [i.e., the large, coconut-eating land-crab (*Birgus latro*?). – Analyst]

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

PLATE 15

•524
292



BALANCING GAME

[Facing p. 175]

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

526 857 481 branch. I have also seen them play with a tree inverted, so that its spreading roots were uppermost; the game was to climb to the top of the root and stand upright, quite a feat of balancing, since the trunk was far from steady (Pl. 15).

857 ● 524 As usual, there are many games based on imitation of their elders. A favourite amusement among the small boys is to truss up one of their number and carry him about on a pole, as their fathers carry pigs. Usually they do not get very far before the struggles of the victim throw the whole lot of them over, amid shrieks of laughter, and sometimes howls.

Sometimes rough attempts are made to construct tiny huts for the purpose of playing at house, but those I saw were very unskilfully put together, and speedily fell to pieces. But once, up in the mountains, I saw what was clearly a children's playhouse, constructed by adults, a small edition of the usual native hut, complete with little plank-beds, beside which lay pipes and materials for chewing the betel-mixture! I was told that sometimes a group of little girls will go off by themselves and build leaf huts in the bush or on the shore, and live there for several days, catching crabs and small fish on the reef, and lizards or other small creatures in the bush, bringing some of these back to the village to exchange for taro, which they take away with them to cook for themselves. This was not done while I was there, but I have sometimes seen a couple of little girls take a bit of broken pot and boil small pieces of taro in it, carefully wrapped up in leaves in imitation of the procedure adopted by their mothers. Great was the joy of one little lady to whom I gave an empty soup tin for the purpose. Both boys and girls like to catch small crabs and roast them over a fire, or hold [262] them in the flame of coco-nut palm leaf torches. Grasshoppers are also caught and roasted in the same manner.

Acting.

Many children are excellent mimics, an accomplishment which is much appreciated by their audience, both children and adults. After the annual visit of inspection of the Governor, the Petats children enacted the whole occasion in most amusing fashion. A row of small ones was drawn up, to represent the parade of villagers which is always a feature of the day. One carried a bit of rag on a pole for a flag. The older child impersonating the Governor had a large umbrella very cleverly made out of leaves spiked through

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

a cane. He and two others came to the end of the landing-stage with slow formal steps, then stopped to take the salute, then he went round saying a few words to one or other of the children in the line, and finally threw among them bits of stick and pigs' teeth for which they scrambled, it being the custom of the Governor to provide tobacco and sweets to be scrambled for at the conclusion of his visit. It was all done very solemnly, till the final scramble, which ended in shrieks of laughter. After that there were races, in the fashion taught them by the Mission.

At Kurtatchi the children used to play a game in which one of their number imitated the actions of a person who is *iburar* (made mad by the spirits, as described on pp. 516–21) and the others pretended to be frightened and ran away from him, till some of them seized him and held him down.

One night two Petats children gave a dancing display, with a circle of admiring adults round them. They did a number of steps which do not occur in the very stereotyped ceremonial dances which are the only ones practised in this area, and seemed to be inventing their movements, which caused much amusement and approbation. But I think this was exceptional, and as a rule, the children were content to show off to one another, or to me. One little girl would go through a series of acrobatic feats, twisting herself about, or lifting another child and holding her horizontally, looking all the while to see whether I was watching. Other children will act for their own amusement, when alone. A little boy who lived near me at Petats used to carry on conversations with himself, in two voices, so different that I frequently looked over to see whether another child had come up. He did not know that I was observing him.

Toys.

Such toys as these children have are made, usually at the time when they are wanted, of the products of the bush. They are few in number, and very crude in construction, but they serve their turn.

Babies have rattles made of shells, with the tongue either of a smaller shell or of a dog's tooth. They may consist of a single shell on the end of a short string of shell-disks, or of several such strings tied together (Pl. 16). They are used also by adults at dances and other ceremonial occasions. I have sometimes seen women string

824 178 I have sometimes CHILDHOOD see women string
524 together the ball-like fruit of the carophyllum tree to make a rattle
531 for their babies.

524 Carophyllum balls are used also as playthings by the women, who take two of them in their hands, hold a shell in one hand, throw a ball into the air and knock the other against the shell before the first falls and is caught. But apart from this kind of catching game, there seems to be very little idea of playing with a ball. This seems curious, in view of all the round fruits and nuts, &c., to be found in the bush, but perhaps the explanation is that most of these will not bounce. When I gave a ball to a small boy he did
526 not know what to do with it, but the new plaything soon caught
177 their interest and my balls became very popular. Young men returned from working on plantations have brought back foot-balls, and this game is now played in most of the villages, in a rough and tumble style, chiefly, if not exclusively, by the older boys and men.

524 Whenever a pig is killed there is great competition among the children for the bladder to blow up into a balloon, the orifice being fastened with a piece of fibre string. If a pregnant sow is killed the embryos are also seized for playthings; the children who are lucky enough to get them run about the village with them all day, showing them to everybody. They carry them about until they tire of them and throw them away.

526 The boys have miniature bows with which they use arrows made out of the mid-rib of the sago-palm leaf. With these they shoot fish, small birds, bats, and occasionally opossum, and they also play at shooting at a mark, such as the top of a tall tree. Even the very small boys were, many of them, quite good at this.

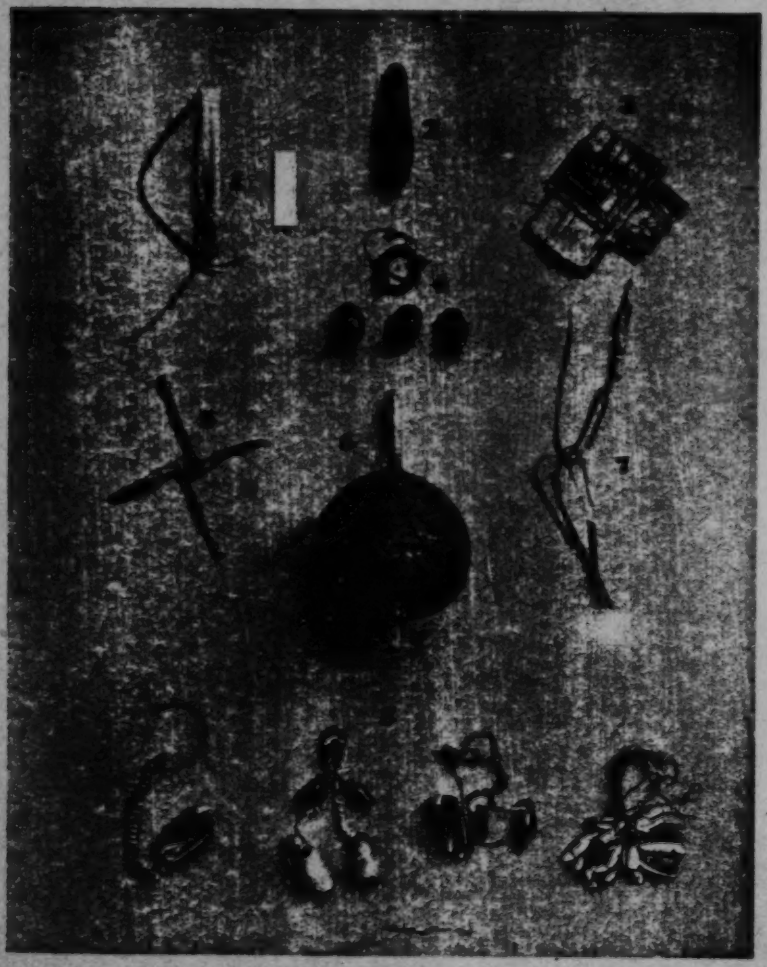
They have mock fights, using sticks instead of spears. These are sometimes quite elaborate affairs, with a number of boys on each side, when they go through the pretence of killing some of the other side, carrying them off, and cutting them up preparatory to making a meal of them, the other side retaliating by doing the same to its own prisoners. Finally, the leader of one side makes peace by sending a message to the leader of the other side to come and chew the betel-mixture with him, the areca-nut which it is customary to send as a symbol being represented by a stone. The affair ends with a friendly meal, in which stones take the place of taro and sand is used for ceremonial pudding.

524 Top-spinning is supposed to be a seasonal game, which should

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

PLATE 16

524



CHILDREN'S TOYS

1. Buzzer. 2. Stone doll. 3, 5, 7. Leaf puzzles. 4. Tops made of canarium almonds. 6. Humming-top made of a coco-nut shell. 8. Rattles.

[facing p. 178]

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

524 be played only after the ceremony for the first almonds has been performed, and continued during the time the almonds are ripe, but I have seen it done in December when they are over. The tops are made of the upper end of a coco-nut shell, and are spun either by hand or with fibre string. The ground in the village, being trodden hard, serves well. Young men play as much as boys, but women and girls are not expected to do so—'they don't know how'. They play either singly or in groups. In one game two lines are formed, one line spins and the others throw their tops at the spinning ones to try to knock them over. Up in the hills, I found tops [184] made of the shells of the canarium almond, with one end cut off neatly and the cut edges painted with red. These were also spun with string (Pl. 16, No. 4). From the village of Kurtatchi I obtained a form of humming-top, made of a whole coco-nut shell with a spike put through it, on which it revolved, and a hole in one side which caused it to make a noise not unlike that of our own humming-tops (Pl. 16, No. 6). Children also fix spikes through the little green balls of the carophyllum tree and spin them by twisting them between their palms.

The girls have objects which serve as dolls, using for them the word *bai'i*, 'child'. One which I brought home with me consists of a long narrow stone, of the kind picked up in river-beds and often used for various magical purposes (Pl. 16, No. 2). One end, representing its head, is decorated with red and black paint in alternate stripes just as a child's head is decorated for special occasions. [824] They also make dolls out of the stalk of the shore lily (*Crinum asiaticum*), putting paint on it and cutting marks in it representing cicatrices, with the appropriate patterns for male and female. They put grass at the top of it to represent the cocks' feathers used for head ornaments at feasts, and flowers for a nose-piece, and another flower for a loin-cloth. A doll's house is sometimes made for it out of the leaf sheaths of young plants.

They make several kinds of puzzle patterns by twisting together the fronds of the coco-nut palm leaf or strips of pandanus (Pl. 16, Nos. 3, 5, 7 are examples of these). No. 1 is a 'buzzer' for imitating the noise made by a black insect called *ruŋ*; the toy is swung round by the bit of fibre string of which a small portion is seen below it in the photograph. I have seen a woman make a toy fishing-rod for her child with the mid-rib of a coco-nut and a bit of banana fibre, tying a shred of areca-nut skin on to it for bait. Windmills

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

524 (*bilin*) are made out of leaves, very much like the paper ones we buy in the street.

Perhaps the favourite 'sitting-down game' for children of both sexes is string figures—'cat's-cradles', *waruru*—at which they are very adept. They use a thin twisted fibre torn from the dried sheath of a banana plant, or a bit of native string. Some of the patterns are very elaborate, generally they are made by one person only, but a few require two pairs of hands, between which the string is interchanged to the accompaniment of a dialogue usually referring to the counting of pigs. I collected over fifty, most of which I have not seen recorded elsewhere. In this part of the world this pastime is not indulged in only by women and children, for though the children are its most frequent performers, men also do not disdain to amuse themselves in this manner. There is no special season for cat's-cradles, they are made every day in every village all the year round.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS ANIMALS

231 825 The children are very friendly with the domestic pigs, which rank as household pets. It is really funny to see a black baby sitting in a black puddle cuddling a large black pig. Unfortunately I never succeeded in getting a good photograph of this characteristic scene. They do not often take liberties with the dogs, which, being kept on short rations, are apt to be bad-tempered.

524 825 As regards wild animals the story is very different. Much has been written about the natural cruelty of children. These of Bougainville are certainly completely indifferent to the amount of suffering they inflict on the beasts, birds, and insects they torture for their amusement, whether wantonly or from thoughtlessness I do not know. They tie all kinds of creatures to a string, and, like Nelly Bly, 'let them go a little way and pull them back again'. I have seen them treat in this manner iguanas, bats, opossum, birds, and also various kinds of insects, including stag-beetles, which they knock off the trees with poles, and whirl round on the end of a string to make them buzz. When the child tires of this game he usually kills the creature by dashing it against the ground. They like to get hold of a mother with its young, perhaps a flying fox or an opossum, and tease both by letting the young one grip its mother and then pulling it away, this game usually finishes by both animals being cooked and eaten. Some children, both boys

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

and girls, like to tie live butterflies to their fuzzy mops with a long string, and watch them flutter round their heads. Instances could be multiplied indefinitely. But they rarely tease or bully their companions, as our own children so frequently do.

524 825

GROUP GAMES

524 957

There is a kind of game, played generally by the little girls, the general plan of which is that the children sit down in a line or a ring and make certain movements accompanied by a chant or a conversation, or both. A typical one is as follows: The children sit in two rows, facing one another, with their legs stretched out so that the toes of the children in one row are touching the toes of those in the other. They rub their hands along their thighs, singing: '*Ko ro soa, ro ro soa, wabiu wakoko-koko kurē, wakurē, wakurē, wakurē.*' *Soa* means to paddle a canoe, the two rows of children are intended to represent the sides of a *mon* (plank canoe, used for long journeys). Presently one child asks her opposite neighbour: '*En no nom ini?*' ('Where are you going?') The other child replies: '*Io tó no no i Timputs*' ('I am going to Timputs'), mentioning the name of some village known to the children. As she says it she tucks up one leg under her body. Then the next child asks the question of her opposite number, and is similarly answered, with the name of another village, and so on, till all the players have one leg tucked up under them. Then the whole performance is repeated, tucking up the other leg. When all have both legs tucked up under them, they say, all together: '*Nog ma tsura, a kūrū awara*' ('Make a fire, here is a snake'). Then they all get up and run away.

Another game, also based on a journey in a canoe, is called *gigiri no mon*—'to paddle a canoe very hard'. The girls—whenever I saw this played it was always girls only who took part in it—sit on the ground close together, one behind the other, each with her legs stretched out one on either side of the girl in front of her, holding her thus round the hips. Then they wriggle along the ground swaying from side to side as if paddling first on one side of a canoe and then on the other, going through the motions of paddling with their hands, singing all together: '*O ro ro soa, wa bi'awa ko ko kwe.*'

Peleg bot I have seen played by little boys. One child sits on the ground with his feet outstretched. Another sits on his feet, which are kept close together. The first child puts his arms one on either side of the second and they clasp hands, then they jerk themselves

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

524 857 along the ground. More children then join in, each sitting on the feet of the one behind. There seem to be no words to this game, and the name of it has no meaning.

The native version of 'Ring-a-ring o' roses' is played to the formula '*a goro pio ma ētfē ia si gin, ia si gin*', which is also meaningless.

524 857 177 Another game is said to belong properly to the island of Nissan. When I saw it, on the beach at Tabut, the children made a little mound of sand and sat round it in a circle, holding in their hands bits of stick ornamented with flowers and leaves tied on to them. Chanting, slowly and somewhat mournfully, the syllables '*Sororōwi, sororōwi, rōwi, rōwi*'—which they could not explain—they passed the sticks from hand to hand. A man standing by told me that at Nissan it is played by older people, and that the man 'makes magic' over the stick before handing it to the girl of his choice; this makes her desire him and afterwards they go off and have sexual connexion together. As I saw it, it appeared to be merely a game, and the children were quite little.

SEXUAL PLAY AND SEX KNOWLEDGE OF CHILDREN

864 On the whole, it seemed to me that there was comparatively little sexual interest in their games and behaviour to each other. The segregation of the boys wearing the upi may perhaps have some bearing on this. I have seen imitations of the act of coitus performed by children; they were done quite openly, but amounted to no more than taking up the appropriate position. On one occasion this was done by two boys, aged perhaps about ten, both wearing the *upi*. They laughed heartily all the while, and volunteered to me the explanation of what they were doing. The point of it, to them, seemed to lie in mimicking their elders. Some younger children once told me, in the course of general chatter, that they had been copulating in the bush; these included both boys and girls, but as all were obviously much below the age of puberty such sexual play as may have taken place between them must have been purely imitative, and possibly they were only romancing.

Small children who finger their own genitals or those of their companions are always promptly reproved by an older child or an adult. Sometimes a boy will pretend to cut off a smaller boy's penis with a knife or a sharp shell.

Children, as often as adults, of both sexes, told myths and stories

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

away. The resulting parcel (measuring perhaps 4 or 5 ft. × 2 ft.) is called *met* ('dead'), and represents the body of a dead man. It is fixed on to a pole in the same way in which pigs are carried, and brought to the village, the men singing as they go. It is put down in front of the principal house; in Kurtatchi village this would be the hut occupied by Pinari's chief wife. Those who take part in bringing it in may not eat or drink or chew the betel-mixture from the time when they awake that morning.

Then they call for the *tsunaun* of the place (at Kurtatchi, Pinari and his two *weonē*-, Pari and Matēv). The *tsunaun* must make fire by rubbing two sticks together, inside the hut, calling the while the names of all the *war*. They take some almonds out of the *met* and throw them into the fire, as soon as it is properly kindled. Then they take lime, and pass it round the fire, taking care not to spill any into the flames. They tap several times on the outside of the lime-pot. A few drops of water and the milk of a drinking coco-nut are scattered in a circle all round the fire. Then they take a taro and put it into the fire, calling on all the *war* who are in the fire to come and drink. Each *tsunaun* calls the names of the *war* of his own lineage. Then they break up some of the fruits of the betel-pepper and throw them into the fire. Then the *tsunaun* take some lime and put it on the ears of all the men who went to gather the almonds in the bush. After this these men can eat and drink and chew the betel-mixture for the first time that day.

Finally, the *tsunaun* break up the *met* and eat some of the almonds inside it. One of the women *tsunaun* (in this village it was Pari) fills a *kōkē* with nuts from the *met*, and takes it to the women, who eat on their side of the hut. When all, both men and women, have finished eating, the slit-gong is beaten. If, when all have eaten as much as they can, there are still some almonds left in the *met*, each person takes a share of them and carries them off to eat at home.

The boys wearing the *upi* are not allowed to take any part in this ceremony. They may not eat almonds at any time after they have put on the hat at the *upi* ceremony, until a special bit of ritual has been gone through, which consists of their being given some nuts to eat in public, thus removing the taboo.

At the conclusion of the ceremony for the first almonds a game is played with tops made of coco-nut shell. The fibrous sheath of

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

524 a coco-nut palm is hung up on a branch, and the tops are thrown at it. There are also competitions to see whose top spins longest. The grown men join the children in this game, but the women are not allowed to play it. After this top spinning becomes general; it is not played for some time previously. (At Petats they did not observe this rule.)

574 The 'time of the almond' is also made the occasion for reciprocal feasts between friendly villages, which have more of a social than of a ceremonial character. The older men will say to the boys: 'You fellows go and get a lot of almonds and make a Tukis.' (Tukis is the name of a group of tiny creatures somewhat similar to our hobgoblins; they are discussed in Chapter XV.) So the boys go to the bush and collect a great quantity of nuts, and bring them to the village, and arrange them on the ground in the central space, in the form of a man; they make his head, and his body, and his arms, and his legs. Then the people of the village all paint themselves with red and black paint, and they play Pan-pipes, and walk round as they do at a *kōma*, while they are cracking the nuts. This is one of the very few occasions on which they *kōma* in daylight; usually it is only done at night. They invite the people of a neighbouring village, who all come with Pan-pipes and join in the *kōma*. Then every one feasts on the nuts. A short time after, the village which was thus invited gives a similar feast in its turn, and asks the people of the former village. After this, if the boys, who naturally much enjoy these festive occasions, ask the *tsunaun* if they may have another, they are told: 'No, our guests have returned the one we gave before, we cannot have another now.'

262 252 Most of the many varieties of bananas are eaten either raw or cooked, but there are some, including one very large plantain (*kay*), which are not palatable until cooked. These are usually boiled in a pot, skin and all. A smaller yellow kind (*tomra*) is usually skinned before being laid on hot embers to roast.

177 262 Oranges and limes grow in the vicinity of most villages and are much appreciated by the natives. They are always eaten raw. The oranges do not change colour when ripe, but remain green; the inside is pale, somewhat resembling the colour of a grape-fruit. They are sweet and juicy. I understand that they are not indigenous, as is also the case with the pawpaw (*Carica Papaya*). This is eaten raw, like a melon, and generally while still, according to our ideas, very far from ripe.